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Jan. 17th In half an hour or so Nessa & Duncan will look in on their way to Rogers to say good bye. This is the true break in the year: Bloomsbury is deferred today till May, I suppose. Clive was off to Germany this morning.

Yesterday we went to Hardy's funeral & what did I think of? Of Max Beerbohms letter, just read; or a lecture to the Newnhamites about womens writing. At intervals some emotion broke in. But I doubt the capacity of the human animal for being dignified in ceremony. One catches a Bishops frown & twitch: sees his polished shiny nose; suspects the rapt spectacled young priest gazing at the cross he carries, of being a humbug; catches Robert Lynds distracted haggard eye; then thinks of the mediocrity of Squire: next here is the coffin, an overgrown one; like a stage coffin; covered with a white satin cloth: bearers elderly gentlemen rather red & stiff, holding to the corners: pigeons flying outside; insufficient artificial light; procession to poets corner: dramatic "in sure — certain hope of immortality" perhaps melodramatic. After dinner at Clives Lytton protested that the great man's novels are the poorest of poor ~~stuff~~; & cant read them. Lytton sitting or lying inert, with his eyes shut, or exasperated with them open. Lady Strachey slowly fading, but it may take years. Over all this broods for me, some uneasy sense, of change, & mortality, & how partings are deaths; & then a sense of my own fame — why should this come over me? — & then of its remoteness; & then the pressure of writing two articles on Meredith & furbishing up the Hardy. And Leonard sitting at home reading. And Max's letter: & a sense of the futility of it all.

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Saturday
11th Feb. I am so cold I can hardly hold the pen. The futility of it all—so I broke off; & have indeed been feeling that rather persistently, or perhaps I should have written here. Hardy & Meredith together sent me toppled to bed with headache. I know the feeling now, when I can't spin a sentence, & sit mumbling & turning; & nothing flits by my brain which is as a blank window. So I shut my studio door, & go to bed, stuffing my ears with rubber; & there I lie a day or two. And what leagues I travel in the time! Such 'sensations' spread over my spine & head directly I give them the chance; such an exasperated tiredness; such anguishes & despairs; & heavenly relief & rest; & then misery again. Never was anyone ~~I~~ so tossed up & down by the body as I am, I think. But this is over: & put away: & Lord Sackville is dead & lies at Withyam, & I passed Knole with Vita yesterday & had to look away from the vast mateless house, without a flag. This is what she minds most. When she left the house behind the old carthorses, she went for ever, she said, after complete rule for three days.

For some reason, I am hacking rather listlessly at the last chapter of Orlando, which was to have been the best. Always always the last chapter slips out of my hands. One gets bored. One whips oneself up. I still hope for a fresh wind, & dont very much bother, except that I miss the fun, which was so tremendously lively all October, November & December. I have my doubts if it is not empty; & too fantastic to write at such length.

For the rest, Bloomsbury today governs. Clive is back: whereupon Mary asks us to lunch: & so we return to some flicker of the snowdrop pallor of very early spri[illegible] & ~~[illegible]~~ My pen protests. This writing is nonsense, it says. And L. is with Mdll. Ed: Pinker has the lice.

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Saturday
~~Jan~~
Feb. 18th

I am happy today. I have still a few pounds in the Bank, & my own cheque book too. This great advance in dignity was made in the autumn. Out of my £60. I have bought a steel bed, a cupboard, a fur coat, a new strip of carpet for the hall. This financial revision has been a great success. And I plan out articles so as to write one & earn £30 a month. And I should be reviewing Lord Chesterfield at this moment, but I'm not. My mind is woolgathering away about Women & Fiction, which I am to read at Newnham in May. The mind is the most capricious of insects — flitting fluttering. I had thought to write the quickest most brilliant pages in Orlando yesterday — not a drop came, ah, forsooth, for the usual physical reasons, which declared themselves today. It is the oddest feeling — as if a finger stopped the flow of the ideas in the brain: it is unsealed, & the blood rushes all over the place. Again, instead of writing O. I've been racing up & down the whole field of my lecture. And tomorrow, alas, we motor: for I must get back into the book — which has brightened the last few days & salutarily. Not that my sensations in writing are an infallible guide.

We dined with Ka. She had unshaded all Henri's lamps, & somehow commonplaced the house strangely. It was full too of those derelicts whom she collects — the lamest, the ugly, the unhappy. Never have I sat next such driftwood as Mrs Campbell. Garnett was a bad — an over-educated prig. So tired I can't talk — three large committees this afternoon — gave accurate information about cooking eggs.

Before that, there was Todd & Clive — Clive is ubiquitous. Todd like some primeval animal emerging

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from the swamp, muddy, hirsute. A woman who is commercial — rather an exception in my world. She spoke of "getting my money back" as Gerald Duckworth might have spoken with the same look of rather hostile & cautious greed, as though the world were banded to rob her. This money-grubbing way is not attractive; but it is lightened by a glimmer of dash & 'chic' even — she stands on her two feet as she expresses it. She is starting a paper — I'm so bored with people starting papers & Mary! There's Desmond for another. But Todd has none of this bubble & froth. She finds work very dull. She likes life. Going to bed with Garland & flirting with Osbert I presume. She is tapir like, & the creatures nose sniffs pertinaciously after Bloomsbury.

Dadie came in for a moment, rather drawn & white, 'making money' too. We are a little out of that, Leonard & I: L. never makes a penny; I mean free to: & I could almost wish we were more lavish in our ways. This is occasionally in my thoughts. And what else is? I doubt that I shall ever write another novel after O. I shall invent a new name for them.

Lunch with Mary: ~~and~~ lunch with Clive: ~~tea~~ dinner with Clive; tea with Jane, raised in bed with her old white head lifted up, on pillows, very aged & rather exalted, able only to talk or look for 10 minutes or so. Mary & Jack simmering with polished domestic affluence & prettiness: gay bunches everywhere; & paint; & carpets: but not much backing to it. Jack develops, before 3 strikes, the storytelling manner: by 3.30 all the stories are told. Home to shabbiness.

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Sunday
18th March

I have lost my writing board: an excuse for the anaemic state of this book. Indeed I only write now, in between letters, to say that Orlando was finished yesterday as the clock struck one. Anyhow the canvas is covered. There will be three months of close work needed, imperatively, before it can be printed; for I have scrambled & splashed, & the canvas shows through in a thousand places. But it is a serene, accomplished feeling, to write, even provisionally, The End, & we go off on Saturday, with my mind appeased.

I have written this book quicker than any: & it is all a joke; & yet gay & quick reading I think; a writers holiday. I feel more & more sure that I will never write a novel again. Little bits of rhyme come in: So we go motoring across France on Saturday: & shall be back on April 17th for the summer. Time flies—oh yes: that summer should be here again: & I still have the faculty of wonder at it. The world swinging round again & bringing its green & blue close to our eyes. Since February I have been a little clouded with headache, had a touch of influenza; & so, with the lights down, & all energy turned to forcing my book along, have not written here. I dislike these months. Shall we try Rome next year? Control of life is what one should learn now: its economical management. I feel cautious, like a poor person, now I am 46. But I may be dead then, I think, & so take my French lessons now, instead of waiting.

Thursday 22nd March These are the last pages at the end of Orlando, & it is twenty five minutes to one; & I have written everything I have to write, & on Saturday we go abroad.

Yes its done—Orlando—begun on 8th October, as a joke; & now rather too long for my liking. It may fall between stools, be too long for a joke, & too frivolous for a ~~book~~ serious book. All this I dismiss from a mind avid only of green fields. The sun: wine; sitting doing nothing: I have been for the last 6 weeks rather a bucket than a fountain; sitting to be shot into by one person after another. A rabbit that passes across a shooting gallery, & one's friends go pop-pop. Heaven be praised, Sibyl to-day puts us off: which leaves Dadie only, & a whole days solitude, please Heaven, tomorrow. But I intend to control this rabbit shooting business when I come back. And money making. I hope to settle in & write one a little discreet article for £25 each month; & so live: without stress; & so read—what I want to read. At 46 one must be a miser; only ~~get the essentials~~ have time for essentials. But I think I have made moral ... Efficient enough. I should describe people, save that, when seen so ~~[illegible]~~ colourlessly, by duty ~~not~~ wish, one's mind is a little slack in taking notes. Morgan & Desmond were here to tea. Morgan more of the blue butterfly than ever. Unless I talk, he says nothing. And any shadow sends ~~a~~ him flitting. Desmond comes in, round as a billiard ball; & this is true of this dear bubbling lazy

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mind; which has such a glitter & lustre now from moving at ease in the world that it puts me into a good temper to be with him. He describes, analyses, narrates; does not actually talk. All his blandishments are now active to get articles for "Life & Letters" which comes out in May. I am scarcely flattered now to be asked; yet of course dashed a little when I refuse Mrs Van Dorens £120 & she takes no notice. And a little dashed, too, not to get the Femina prize — partly because I've been exhibited as a competitor & people will think me dashed. which I'm not, innately.

Roger, Helen, Ka & Will, the other night. Roger malicious — bitter, & vain. "I am the most read critic in ~~London~~ England. — yet I have nowhere to write." Analysed, this amounts to the fact that the Nation only pays him £5, & ~~Knody~~ Konody gets more, & the pages of the Burlington are more thumbed at his articles than at MacColls. There is an innocence in this vanity which is likeable; but I am touchy for the reputation of Bloomsbury. I thought I could see Ka & Will comparing us, & being glad we were not impeccable. They compare us with the political world: we them with our own. Will lay with his eyes shut. & I was rather sorry for him: He knows what Roger thinks of his pictures & what I dont think — for I dont look at them — but he has the generosity to praise my books. We middleaged people now scarcely covet each others good opinion very seriously: are content to be different.

Wailing blowing weather; & this time next week we shall be in the middle of France.

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Tuesday April 17th

Home again, as foretold, last night, & to settle the dust in my mind, write here. We have been across France & back—every inch of that fertile field traversed by the admirable Singer. And now towns & spires & scenes begin to rise in my mind as the rest sinks: I see Chartres in particular, the snail, with its head straight, marching across the flat country. The most distinguished of churches. The rose window is like a jewel on black velvet. ~~Ese~~ The outside is very intricate yet simple: elongated; somehow preserved from the fantastic & ornate. Grey weather dashed all over this: & I remember coming in at night in the wet often, & hearing the rain in hotels. Often I was bobbing up & down on my two glasses of vin du pays.

It was rather a rush & a cram—as these jumbled notes testify. Once we were high up on a mountain in a snow storm; & rather afraid of a long tunnel. Twenty miles often cut us off from civilisation. One wet afternoon we punctured in a mountain village & I went in & sat with the family—a nice scrupulous polite woman, a girl who was pretty, they had a friend called Daisy at Earlsfield. They caught trout & wild boars. Then as we went to Florac, where I found a book—Girardin's memoirs in the old book case that had been sold with the house. Always some good food & hot bottles at night. And there was Nessa, & Duncan & Clive (who snubbed me in public—curse him for an uneasy little upstart) Oh & my prize—£40 from the French. And Julian. And one or two hot days, & the Pont du Gard in the sun; & Les Beaux (this is where Dante got his idea of Hell Duncan said) & mounting all the time steadily was my desire for words. Till I envisaged a sheet of paper a pen & ink

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is something of miraculous desirability — could even relish the scratch as if it were a divine kind of relief to me — And there was ~~the~~ St Remy & the ruins in the sun. I forget now how it all went — how things fitted together: but the eminences now emerge, & I noticed how, talking to Raymond at the Nation this afternoon we had already pitched on the high points. Before that, crossing the graveyard in the bitter windy rain, we saw Hope & a dark cultivated woman. But as they went past us, with the waxen grey eye. Next moment I heard Virginia, & turned & there was Hope coming back — "Jane died yesterday" she murmured, half asleep, talking distraught, 'all ghastly.' We kissed by Cromwell's daughter's grave, where Shelley used to walk, for Jane's death. She lay dead outside the graveyard in that back room where we saw her lately raised on her pillows, like a very old person, whom life has tossed up, & left; exalted, [illegible]. shrouded. Hope the colour of dirty brown paper. Then to the Office. Then home to work here; & now to work & work, as hard as I can.

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Saturday 21st April.

A bitter windy rainy day. There is no blue, no red, no green in this delectable spring. Furs are in the shops. I have walked across the Park with Leonard; come home; find the chairs in the studio; must write here instead of making as I had meant some carefully polished sentences—for Orlando is to tell the truth, damned rough.

Life is either too empty or too full. Happily, I never cease to transmit these curious damaging shocks. At 46 I am not callous; suffer considerably; make good resolutions—still feel as experimental & on the verge of getting at the truth as ever. Then Vita—to change the subject & take up the burden of fact—has had a stupendous row with her mother—in the course of which she was made to take the pearl necklace from her neck, cut it in two with a pocket knife, deliver over the 12 central pearls, but the others, all running loose in an envelope the solicitor gave her.

Thief, liar, I hope you'll be killed by an omnibus—so 'my honoured Lady Sackville' addressed her, trembling with rage in the presence of a secretary & a solicitor & a chauffeur. The woman is said to be mad. Vita very gallant & wild & tossing her head & taking me to the Zoo & saying she was wild & free & wd. make her money now herself by writing.

And I find myself again in the old driving whirlwind of writing against time. Have I ever written with it? But I vow I wont spend longer at Orlando, which is a freak: it shall come out in September, though the perfect artist would revise & rewrite & polish—infinitely. But how am I eager ever to be filled with reading something or other—I'm not sure what. What sort of summer do I desire?

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Now that I have 16 pounds to spend before July 1st (on our new system) I feel freer: can afford a dress or a hat. — So may go about, a little, at least. And yet the only exciting life is the imaginary one. Once I get the wheels spinning in my head, I dont want money much, or dress, or even a cupboard, a bed at Rodmell or a sofa. Dined with Lydia. Maynard: two couples. elderly. childless distinguished. He & she both urbane & admirable. Grey comes at Maynards temples. He is finer looking now: not so pompous or gross: simple: with his mind working always, on Russian. Bolshevists, Glands. Genealogies: always the proof of a ~~great~~ remarkable mind when it overflows thus vigorously into byepaths. There are two royal stocks in England he says from which all intellect descends. He will work this out as if his fortune depended on it. Lydia is composed. & controlled. She says very sensible things.

We went also to Jane's funeral, getting 'there' (somewhere out of the world where buses pass only one every 15 minutes; just as the service ended: marching into the church clamorously. & it was only barely full of the dingiest people: cousins I fancy from the North, very drab: the only male relation afflicted, with a bubbly chin, a stubbly beard & so ~~gobbl~~ goggly eyes. Distinguished people drag up such queer chains of family when they die. They had hired Daimlers too, which succeeded the coffin at a foot's pace. We walked to the grave; the clergyman, a friend, waited for the dismal company to collect: then read some of the loveliest, most rational parts of the Bible; & said by heart, Abide with me. The gravedigger

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had given him, surreptitiously, a handful of clay, which he divided into three parts & dropped at the right moment. ~~then~~ A bird sang most opportunely: with a grey indifference, & one liked, hope, that Jane would have enjoyed. Then the incredibly drab female cousins advanced, each with a fat bunch of primroses & dropped them in; & we also advanced & looked down, after at the coffin at the bottom of a very steep, brazen looking grave — But tho' I almost cried, I felt very little — only the beauty of the Come unto me all ye that are weary; but as usual the obstacle of not believing dulled & bothered me. Who is 'God' & what the Grace of Christ? & what did they mean to Jane?

Raymond to tea — an two hours animated admirable light & airy & well seasoned talk, about Lady Morley: ghosts; Castlerosse; novels: not people much. But he has his shirts made of figured table cloths & things, hard. And what am I to read? Pinker is back. And Leonard having tea with his mother. And perhaps the old woman has righted herself through my room. — I can go down & do that typing, & write to the little man who smacks me in public & appeals for my sides — Clive I mean.

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Tuesday
April
24th

Waiting for Jumbo—how I do hate waiting for anybody! Can't settle, read, think—so I write: an odd tribute to the uses I put this diary to. And I should be typing O. in the basement. Must now do 10 pages daily till June 1st. Well. I like being an ass on a milk round. In from the triumph of buying a dress & a ~~£~~ coat for about 5.10. What one must do is to face the girl with one's naked kindly searching eye: speak firmly: ask for a looking glass & study aspects. Then they quail, under powder & paint. A lovely soaring summer day this: Nelly sent howling home to her aunt. I was reading Othello last night & was impressed by the volley & volume & tumble of his words: too many I should say were I reviewing for the Times. He put them in when tension was slack. In the great scenes, everything fits like a glove. The mind tumbles & splashes among words when it is not being urged on: I mean, the mind of a very great master of words who is ~~using them~~ writing with one hand. He abounds. The lesser writers stint. As usual, impressed by Sh[akespeare]. But my mind is very bare to words—English words—at the moment. They hit me so hard, I watch them bounce & spring. I've read only French for 4 weeks. An idea comes to me for an article on French: what we know of it.

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Friday May 4th

And now there's the Femina prize to record before I go off this brilliant summer day to tea with Miss Jenkins in Doughty Street. I am going dutifully, not to snub the female young. But I shall be overpowering I doubt not. British— a wonderful day.

The prize was an affair of dull stupid horror: a function; not alarming; stupefying. Hugh Walpole saying how much he disliked my books; rather, how much he feared for his own. Little Miss Robins, like a red breast, crepuscular. I remember your mother — the most beautiful Madonna & at the same time the most complete woman of the world. Used to come & see me in my flat (I see this as a summer visit one hot day) She never confided. She would suddenly say something so unexpected, from that madonna face, one thought it *vicious*. This I engraved: nothing else made much impression. Afterwards there was the horror of having looked ugly in cheap black clothes. I cannot control this complex. I wake at dawn with a start. Also this 'fame' is becoming vulgar & a nuisance. It means nothing; & ~~is~~ yet takes one's time. Crosby: Gaige: offers: Americans perpetually.

We have seen an endless number of people — Eddie, Lytton, Mrs Ritchie, Francis; Vita, — & now the minute Jenkins.

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Thursday May 31st.

No I cannot read Proust at the moment — Leonard is reading Orlando, which goes to the printer tomorrow. It is very quiet at the moment. Whitsun is over. We were at Rodmell & saw the races, where the marsh used to be. And our field is sold to Allinson — who is going to build. And what then? I have no brain left over to think with. And Leonard is arguing in the basement with Dadie — What can it be about? Pinker is asleep in the chair. Angelica comes back tomorrow. I feel a kind of draught caused by the lack of Nessa, & ask how shall I manage if we are apart 6 months, not only 4? But my creed is to batter down opposition. I have seen —

I daresay a good many people, Rose Macaulay, Rebecca West, Maurois Hugh to mind in a bunch last week, & Todd's room, rather to her credit, workmanlike: Garland hearkening a falcon; Todd as buxom as a badger. Rebecca a hardened old reprobate of [illegible], but no fool; & the ~~hot~~ whole atmosphere professional; no charm, except the rather generous charm of Garland.

Clive's book out — a very superficial one, L. says.

The sun is out again: I have half forgotten Orlando already, since L. has read it & it has half passed away from my possession: I think it lacks the sort of hammering I should have given it if I had taken longer: is too freakish & unequal. Very brilliant now & then. As for the effect of the whole, that I can't judge. Not, I think 'important' among my works. L. says a satire.

Gosse is dead, & I am half reconciled to him — by

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Tessie saying ~~he~~ in the papers that he chose a risky dangerous operation rather than be an invalid for life. This vitality always gets me. This kind of flourish round his grave; But — lies otherwise — how dear Desmond with 3 children to keep has to be as profuse of them as anybody.

We met him yesterday in Kingsway, just as I was thinking how I should describe him if I wrote a Memoir, as Molly wishes. He turned up as if my thought had made him visible. He gave me the first number of his paper.

Rose Macaulay says "Yes I won the prize" — rather peevishly. I think at once that she is jealous, — test ~~whatev~~ whatever else she says with a view to finding out whether she is or not. About Colefax: "I'm the only one of all my friends who isn't asked there!" About work: 'I've got to work tomorrow' I say excusing myself for not going to Raymond's party. "So have we all" rather sharply. & so on, this shows through a dozen little fissures, as we're talking of America, articles &c: she is ~~jeals~~ jealous of me; anxious to compare us: but I may imagine it: & it shows my own jealousy no doubt, as suspicions always do. One couldn't know them if one hadn't got them. And now to Angelica with a basket of bulls eyes. I am again beginning to read.

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L. takes Orlando more seriously than I had expected. Thinks it in some ways better than the Lighthouse: about more interesting things, & with more attachment to life, & larger. The truth is I expect I began it as a joke, & went on with it seriously. Hence it lacks some unity. He says it is very original. Anyhow I'm glad to be quit this time of writing 'a novel'; & hope never to be accused of it again. Now I want to write some very closely reasoned ~~but~~ criticism; book on fiction; an essay of some sort (but not Tolstoy for the Times) Dr. Burneys Evening party I think for Desmond. And then? I feel anxious to keep the hatch ~~da~~ down: not to let too many projects come in. Something abstract poetic next time — I dont know. I rather like the idea of these Biographies of living people. Ottoline suggests Henley — but no. And I must tear up all that manuscript, & write a great many notes & adventure out into the world — as I shall do tomorrow, when I go to have my ears pierced with Vita.

June weather. Still, bright. fresh. Owing to the Lighthouse (car) I dont feel so shut in London as usual, & can imagine the evening in some moor now, or in France without the envy I used to have, in London on a fine evening. ~~We~~ Also London itself perpetually attracts stimulates, gives me a play & a story & a poem without any trouble, save that of moving my legs through the streets. I walked Pinker to Grays Inn Gardens this afternoon, & saw — Red Lion Square: Morris's house: thought of them on winter evenings in the 50ties; thought we are just as interesting. saw the ~~street~~ Great Ormond St where a dead girl was found yesterday:

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seen & heard the Salvation Army making Xmas day gay for the people: a great deal of nudging & joking on the part of very unattractive young men & women; making it lively, I suppose; & yet, to be truthful, when I watch them I never laugh or criticise but only feel how strange & interesting this is: wonder what they mean by 'Come to the Lord!' I daresay exhibitionism accounts for some of it. the applause of the gallery: this lures boys to sing hymns; & kindles shop boys to announce in a loud voice that they are saved. This is what writing for the Evening Standard is for Rose Macaulay & I was going to say myself: but so far I have not done it.

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Wed 20th June

June

Of the rest of Orlando I can write nothing. I have corrected the proofs in a week; & cannot spin another phrase. I detest my own volubility. Why be always spouting words? Also I have almost lost the power of reading. Correcting proofs 5, 6, or 7 hours a day, writing in this & that meticulously, I have bruised my reading faculty severely. Take up [illegible] [illegible] & put him down. This is the worst time of all. It makes me suicidal. Nothing seems left to do. All seems insipid & worthless. Now I will watch & see how I resurrect. I think I shall read something — say life of Goethe. Then I shall visit about. Mercifully, Nessa is back. My earth is watered again. I go back to words of one syllable: feel come over me the feathery change: rather like that: as if my physical body put on some soft comfortable skin. She is a necessity to me — as I am not to her. I run to her as the wallaby runs, to the old kangaroo. She is also very cheerful, solid, happy. The trifles that annoy other people, she passes off; as if her happiness were a million or two in the bank. And how masterfully she controls her dozen lives; never in a muddle or desperate, or worried; never spending a pound or a thought needlessly; yet with it all free, careless, airy, indifferent: a very notable achievement. Julian dining with us tonight to meet Miss Sylva Norman whom I fetched up from complete nonentity on the telephone last night. Another marvel of science. There she was in 10 minutes after we thought of her saying she would LOVE to come. Julian is a vast fat powerful sweet tempered engaging young man, into whose arms I let myself fall, half sister, half mother; & half (but arithmetic denies this) the mocking stirring contemporary friend. Mercifully Julian has his instincts sane & normal: has a wide forehead, & considerable address & competence in the management of life. But my tooth is aching. They will dine with us; & that is what I am ripe for — to go adventuring on the streams of other peoples lives — speculating, adrift

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Friday 22nd June

So far I wrote & was interrupted—always interrupted: am now off to Ruislip with Stoker to read her, &c

July 7th

& a Saturday morning, very hot & fine.

All last night I dreamt of Katherine Mansfield & wonder what dreams are: often evoke so much more emotion, than ~~the~~ thinking does—almost as if she came back in person & was outside one, actively making one feel; instead of a figment called up & recollected, as she is, now, at most often. Yet some emotion lingers in the day after a dream: even though I've now almost forgotten what happened in the dream, except that she was lying on a sofa in a room high up, & a great many sad faced women were round her. Yet somehow I got the feel of her, & of her as if alive again, more than by day.

At Long Barn yesterday, & good rather happy visit. I'm interested by the gnawing down of strata in friendship: how one passes unconsciously to different terms; takes things easier: don't mind at all hardly about dress or anything; scarcely feel even exciting atmosphere, which, too, has its drawback from the "fizzing" point of view: yet is saner, perhaps deeper. Lay by the black currant bushes lecturing Vita on her floundering habits with the Campbells for instance. Mrs C. beat by her husband, all because V. will come trampling with her silver & her coronets & her footmen into the life of a herring-cooker. She cooks herrings on a gas stove, I said, always remembering my own phrases.

But having thus scrambled in a page, I must go— & yet want to stay & write about Sterne.

1928

Wednesday

Aug. 9th

Monks House
Rodmell.

Eddy has just gone, leaving me the usual feeling: why is not human intercourse more ~~mak~~ definite, tangible: why aren't I left holding a small round substance, say of the size of a pea, in my hand; something I can put in a box & look at? There is so little left. Yet these people one sees, are fabrics only made once in the world; these contacts we have are unique; & if E. were, say killed tonight, nothing definite would happen to me; yet his substance is never again to be repeated. Our meeting is — but the thread of this idea slips perpetually; constantly though it recurs, with sadness, to my mind: how little our relationships matter; & yet they are so important: in him, in me ~~such invaluable~~ something to him, to me. Intensely sentient, of the highest vividness, reality. But if I died tonight, he too would continue. Something illusory then enters into all that part of life. I am so important to myself: yet of no importance to other people: like the shadow passing over the downs. I deceive myself into thinking that I am important to other people: that makes part of my extreme vividness to myself: as a matter of fact, I dont matter; & so part of my vividness is unreal; gives me a sense of illusion. Eddy says he thinks "What impression am I making?" constantly & is agitated: as a matter of fact, he is probably making no impression: his agitation is thus about nothing: he is mistaken.

But, superficially speaking — for fundamentally I

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was thinking a thousand other thoughts; his presence was only diffused a ~~lie~~ a light on the surface of my mind — something green or rose-coloured or grey — while the water slowly rushed on, in its old fierce way — thoughts about my writing; & about old age; & about buying the field, (we bought it this morning) & about the children being noisy; & if I had bought tooth-paste: All this went on sub-cutaneously. Yet his presence somehow checked the flow of sub-cutaneous life. I was always having to think what comes next? How am I to break into this other life which is 6 inches off mine in the deck chair in the orchard? So that my own thoughts could not flow deep or rushed, as they are doing now that Eddy is on his way to Tunbridge Wells — And what remains of Eddy is and in some ways more vivid, though more transparent, all of him composing itself in my mind, all I could get of him, & making itself a landscape appropriate to it; making a work of art positively.

I am, as I write, whenever I come to a stop, looking out of the Lodge window, at our field; & the little cottage boys, with the cursed shrill voices, playing cricket half way down it; & as usual I am sentimental & worried. Children playing: yes, & interrupting me; yes & I have no children of my own; & never have: & yet I dont want them any more, since my ideas so possess me; & I detest more & more interruptions; & the slow heaviness of physical

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life, & almost unlike peoples bodies, I think, as I grow older; & want always to cut that short, & get my utmost fill of the marrow, of the essence.

I write thus partly in order to skip the burden of writing narrative. as for instance; we came here a fortnight ago. And we lunched at Charleston & Tilton & we were offered the field & we went to see the farm at Lime Kiln. Yet no doubt I shall be more interested, come 10 years, in facts; & shall want, as I do when I read, to be told details, details, so that I may look up from the page & arrange them too, into one of those makings up which seem so much truer done thus, from heaps of ~~[illegible]~~ non-assorted facts, than now I can make them, when all is almost ~~so~~ immediately being done under my eyes. It was a fine day, last Monday I rather think; & we drove through Ripe; & there was a girl & her fellow at the gate in a narrow lane; & we had to interrupt them to turn the motor. I thought how the things they had been saying were dammed like a river by our interruption; & they stood there hanging around, yet impatient, telling us to go to the left, but the road was up. They were glad when we went; yet gave us a flash judgment. Who are these people in that motor car: where are they going? — & then sunk beneath the mind, & they forgot us completely. We went on. And then we reached the farm. The oaks ~~picked out~~ had umbrella spokes sticking out at the tops. All was so ruined & faded. The Elizn far Tudor

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farm house was almost blind; very small eye browed windows: old Stuart farmers must have peered out over the flat land, very dirty, ill-kempt, like people in slums. But they had dignity: at least thick walls; fireplaces; & solidity whereas now the house is lived in by one old, ~~wed~~ weedy pink faced man, who flung himself into his arm chair—Go where you like—go anywhere he said, loose jointed, somehow decayed, like the hop oasts; & damp like the mildewed carpets, & sordid, like the beds with the pots sticking out under them. The walls were sticky; the furniture mid Victorian; little light came through. It was all dying, decaying: & he had been there 50 years, & would drop to pieces, since there is not enough beauty or strength to make anyone repair it.

Aug 12th Shall I now continue this soliloquy, or shall I imagine an audience, which will make me describe? This sentence is due to the book on fiction which I am now writing—once more, O once more. It's a hand to mouth book. I scribble down whatever I can think of about Romance, Dickens &c. must hastily forge a Jane Austen tonight & dish up something tomorrow. All this criticism however may well be dislodged by the desire to write a story. The Moths hovers somewhere at the back of my brain: Janie & Julian have just gone. Julian a little in the style of Jem, only so much saner: broad browed, wavy haired, vast, fat, powerful, good-tempered. He still laughs a great deal; but perhaps less than he did. Perhaps he is sticking his pitchfork in the ground. Janie is a silver lapdog girl; like those long

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faced prominent eyed wrinklenosed little dogs that women
carry about the streets: intelligent, vivacious, opening her
mouth wide & snapping it shut; on one side a Carpenters
granddaughter – on the other a Strachey. Perhaps a little
common do I mean? But Clive said yesterday at
Charleston that there were no class distinctions.
We had tea from bright blue cups under the pink light of
the giant hollyhock. We were all a little
drugged with the country: a little bucolic I thought.
It was lovely enough – made me envious of its country
peace: the trees all standing securely – why did
my eye catch the trees? The look of things has a great
power over me. Even now, I have to watch the rooks
beating up against the wind, which is high. & still I
say to myself instinctively "whats the phrase for that?"
& try to make more & more vivid the roughness of the
air current & the tremor of the rooks wing ~~deep~~
~~breasting it~~ – as if the air were full of ridges & ripples &
roughnesses; they rise & sink, up & down, as if the
exercise ~~pleased them~~. But what a little I can
get down into my pen of what is so vivid to my eyes. –
not only to my eye: also to some nervous fibre, a fan like membrane in my
species. Janie Julian Leonard & I sat in the
orchard till the wind got too strong. & I made
them come out on the marsh & was sorry the
river was low, or they might have praised it.
And (irrelevantly) Miss Ritchie praises Orlando. –
I was pleased till I thought: perhaps this is gratitude for our
£20 Yet I dont think much either way about Orlando.
Odd, how I feel myself under orders; always marching on –
definite stage, this is one I set myself. And
Quentin at Charleston was a little too aloof & supercilious
seeming.

slicing

rubbed
& braced them
like swimmers
in rough
water

with each
book,

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Monday
Aug 14th.

Just back from Long Barn, & Dottie's new house, Penn in the Rocks. Can one really be in love with a house? Is there not something sterile, so that one's mind becomes stringy in these passions? There is too a passion for other people to praise it. And I don't want possessions. I think this is true. I don't want to be Dottie collecting linen settees & arm chairs round myself. But then I have now a pressing sense of the flight of time; & if one is so soon to arrive, why pack all these things? More truthfully, if one is so soon to start, why prepare all these impedimenta. I feel on the verge of the world, about to take flight. Dottie on the other hand feels "I have at last, in spite of every other grudge on the part of fate, 10 or 15 thousand a year; & it's only fair that I should get from my money what I can." Somehow angrily then she sets to work to make her money ~~do for her~~ slave for her. She has bought for ever & ever all these couchant rocks: rocks like kneeling elephants; agonised writhing rocks elongated rocks, rocks with grotesque roots grown into them, & Japanese trees on top. She runs about, defiant strident a little discordant in her top boots with her dog & says "I'm so tired — so worn out" gesticulates, exaggerates. I like the ~~[illegible]~~ aristocratic tradition of space & a few good things. The house, itself is now in decline. Half a ceiling ~~overhangs a~~ intersects ~~the~~ what were & will be dining room & bedroom above. This gives the house a provisional air; its not a house that has been there 300 years, & housed Penn & other families: its nothing — which in a house is distressing.

After that country, though, how I adore the

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Emptiness, bareness, air & colour of this! Really I would not give this view for Dottie's rocks. At which I think grandfathers feeling for the Alps – this ecstasy of mine over the bare slope of Asheham hill. But then, as I remind myself, half the beauty of a country or a house comes from knowing it. One remembers old loveliness: knows that it is now looking ugly, - waits, to see it light up; knows where to find its beauty, how to ignore the bad things. This one can't do the first time of seeing. But they build with beautiful blocks of grey stone in Kent. W's. farmhouse was the very house for me. Solid, high, with the shape of the stone showing in the wall. This is all thrown in with her rocks. And she ecstasies over them, fancying them sympathetic to her genius, & makes them in to part of her belief in her own genius.

Monks House looked very nice, unexpectedly so, & the Great lily in the window has now four flowers – they opened in the night. So I was appeased aesthetically for my disappointment in having no letters — not one.

I was going to remark however that Dottie's rocks are powdered pale grey & bright greens; they are grey as elephant backs. There are too, bunches of scarlet berries hanging against them: only all too verdant, mossy, steamy, & enclosed for my taste. However, in the train it struck me that this, even from one's own point of view, is a great advantage that other people should like rocks & so on; why – I can't at the moment remember.

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Friday
Aug 31st

This is the last day of August. & like almost all of them of extraordinary beauty. Each day is fine enough & hot enough for sitting out; but also full of wandering clouds; & that fading & rising of the light which so ~~x~~ enraptures me in the downs: which I am always comparing to the light beneath an alabaster bowl &c. The corn is now stood about in rows of three four or five solid shaped yellow cakes—rich, it seems, with eggs & spice: good to eat. Sometimes I see the cattle galloping 'like mad' as Wordsworth would say, in the brooks. The clouds—if I could describe them I would: one yesterday had flowing hair on it, like the very fine white hair of an old man. At this moment they are white in a leaden sky: but the sun, behind the house, is making the grass green. I walked to the racecourse today & saw a weasel. Morgan was here for the week end; timid, touchy, infinitely charming. One night we got drunk, & talked of sodomy. & sapphism, with emotion—so much so that next day he said he had been drunk. This was started by Radclyffe Hall & her meritorious dull book. They wrote articles for Hubert all day. & got up petitions: & then Morgan saw her & she screamed like a herring gull, ~~made~~ mad with egotism & vanity. Unless they say her book is good, she wont let them complain of the laws. Morgan said that Dr. Head can convert the sodomites. "Would you like to be converted?" Leonard asked. "No" said Morgan, quite definitely. He said he thought sapphism disgusting: partly from convention, partly because he disliked

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that women should be independent of men.

Probably the reason why I shall be so much bored this week end by Mrs Woolf is that we shall not be able to say a word we mean. This like talking to a child: a child, too, with 'feelings': a child with "rights" & a sense of propriety & respectability & what ought to be said & done. Having made up all these principles she is, & they all are, terribly devitalised; because they, naturally, get no pleasure from life; are cased in thick wool from any direct contact; & so these people — an immense class — are always uneasy unless they are eating, being flattered or doing some natural task, like nursing a child. And then, if the child is Leonard, he grows up & is horribly bored by you.

Meantime began Peacock, without attempting to describe the extraordinary primeval appearance of the farm wagons, so laden with the hay in the brooks that they look like some vast shaggy animal moving on very short legs.

We have seen Mr James about the field; & will soon, I hope, sign the ~~lease; &~~ agreement, & cheque; & put up a fence, which is my first act as a landowner to keep the cottage children out. Nessa, being a mother, & thus not sentimental about children, says, "They can easily play somewhere else."

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Monday
Sept 3rd

The battle of Dunbar, the Battle of Worcester, & the death of Cromwell — how often it seems to me I said that to my father ("my" father, not 'father' any more) at St Ives; standing bolt upright in the dining room at Talland House. And this a perfect 3rd of September day. Leonard gave me the blue glass jug today, because he was cross when I slapped his nose with sweet peas, & because I was nice to his mother; & when I went into luncheon I saw it on the table. Indeed, I almost cried. He went to Brighton to get it for me. "I thought of it just as I was getting into the car" he said. Perhaps I have analysed his motives wrongly.

Seldom have I felt as tired as I did last night. This shaky ramshackle old lady of 76 wore us out. Her talk — I have written it for Nessa so cannot repeat — never stops: never follows a line: is always about people: starts anywhere; at any moment: breaks into "St Schubert fees: did you know Len that Mrs Harris lives in Gordon Sqre? So on to her daughter: how she met me playing bridge &c.. What makes it difficult is that she divines states of feeling to some extent, & would say pointedly "you must often think of your writing when you are not writing, Virginia", when through exhaustion I became silent. I had one moment of headache & acute discomfort this morning, when she became 'intimate', & said how much she had been touched when I sat beside her in the car yesterday. Why did I hate it so? I felt the horror of family life, & the terrible threat to one's liberty that used to feel with father, Aunt Mary or George. This an emotion one never gets from any other human relationships. She had the right to exact this on my

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part; & would feel pleasure & pain irrationally & somehow put her claws in me. These feelings are as violent as any. And there was the sentimental, yet very vain & almost insanely selfish dialogue about her love for her children: how they — these dull plain serviceable Jews & Jewesses — were all splendid men & women: at which my gorge rose. How strangely she made everything commonplace, ugly, suburban, notwithstanding a charm too: something fresh & vital such as old women have, & not, I think, old men. But to be attached to her as daughter would be so cruel a fate that I can think of nothing worse: & thousands of women must be dying of it in England today: the tyranny of mother over daughter, & father: their right to the dear being as powerful as anything in the world. And then they ask, why women dont write poetry. Thought of killing Mrs W. nothing could be done day after day our life would be crumpled up, like a bill for 10 pen 3 farthings. Nothing has ever been said of this.

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Monday Sept. 10th

This is written, as this is so often written, to fill up a little jagged piece of time, with Kennedy, the soft dribbling bore, with a bill that opens wide & says 'Quack' in the drawing room, & Leonard talking to Mr James about the field. Desmond, who lunched here with Julian has just gone. We spent the afternoon — hour after hour wasting away again, or why not say for once turning to gold & silver — for I should only have been reading Moby Dick otherwise — we coining gold & silver talk then — talk very intimate now, more so than ever: a continuation of our talk in Tavistock Sqre the other day: there he said he had now 12 years to live: & none to be quit: & here we talked of his work, money, women, children, & writing: till I took him along the Roman road; & back to tea. I was amused to find that when Rebecca West says "men are snobs" she gets an instant rise out of Desmond: & I thwarted him by quoting the condescending phrase used about women novelists 'limitations' in Life & Letters. But there was no acrimony in this. We talked only fertilely: never touching a scum dry. Do you suppose then that we are now coming like the homing rooks back to the tops of our trees? & that all this cawing is the beginning of settling in for the night? I seem to notice in several of my friends some endearing & affecting cordiality: & a pleasure in intimacy: as if the sun were sinking. Often that image comes to me with some sense of my physical state being colder now, the sun just off one; the old disc of ~~[illegible]~~ one's being growing cooler — but this only just beginning: & one will turn cold & silver like the moon.

This has been a very

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animated summer: a summer lived almost too much in public. Often down here I have entered into a sanctuary; a nunnery; had a religious retreat; of great agony once; & always some terror: so afraid one is of loneliness: of seeing to the bottom of the vessel. That is one of the experiences I have had here in some Augusts; & got then to a consciousness of what I call 'reality': a thing I see before me; something abstract; but residing in the downs or sky; beside which nothing matters; in which I shall rest & continue to exist. Reality I call it. And I fancy sometimes this is the most necessary thing to me: that which I seek. But who knows — once one takes a pen & writes? How difficult not to go making 'reality' this & that, whereas it is one thing. Now perhaps this is my gift: this perhaps is what distinguishes me from other people: I think it may be rare to have so acute a sense of something like that — but again, who knows? I would like to express it too.

Pinker had 4 puppies the day (Friday) we went to the Bagenals & Dotty. Dotty was rested, shabby, intense a little; she showed us the rocks. Leonard 'took against' her, as nurses say: violently. We drove home very fast. I on the other hand took a favour of Barbara — & wished I had gone up alone with her onto the downs. I — perhaps Leonard interrupted here.

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Monday
Sept 17th

I have precisely 5 minutes before dinner. Quentin has swallowed those precious two hours in which I was to have read Dorothy Osborne. Quentin grows elegant & self conscious, liking to use French words; very sophisticated, showing in every movement now the shadow of our youth, as a set: uneasy, I doubt not; quick, sensitive; but wanting something of Julian's force — simplicity. So they change parts, growing & changing, turning from fat to thin. The drawing room smells with his paints — the gramophone the Moby Dick in white. Rachel came in with Angelica. We had Desmond She has quick silver eyes, mended stockings, all the charm & dexterity of a poor clever man's child, whose curls are kept brushed, who mends her stockings, who lives on her adventures.

Desmond was here, talking the other day: intimate again. & yet too urbane, perhaps; or do I think this from the letter that so annoyed me — thinking of my papers "butterfly lightness" — how angry I was, how depressed I became. Leonard agrees that to he has a complex, which leads him to belittle & fondle this.

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Saturday Sept 22nd

This is written on the verge of my alarming holiday in Burgundy. I am alarmed of 7 days alone with Vita: interested: excited, but afraid — she may find me out, I her out. I may (& there's Mabel the Bride in her white dress at the pump: the bridegroom, a carter out of work, wears white socks — are they pure? I doubt it. They are going to spend their honeymoon near Pevensey. He was 15 minutes late & we saw her come in wearing a wreath. And I felt this is the heart of England — this wedding in the country: history I felt: Cromwell: The Osbornes: Dorothy: ~~the~~ shepherdesses singing: of all of whom Mr & Mrs Jarrad seem more the descendants than I am: & they represented the unknown heathens of England & L. & I, leaning over the wall, were detached, unconnected. I suppose our thinking is the cause of this: we dont belong to any class: we thinkers: might as well be French or German. Yet I am English in some ways — But I was saying I should on the whole be confident about this French journey — that it will turn out well. I'm afraid of the mornings most: & 3 o'clock in the glamour: & wanting something Vita does not want. And I shall spend the money that might have bought a table or a glass. What one brings in foreign travel is a series of scenes: which gradually ~~cut~~ diminish to one or two, such a I still have of Greece & Venice as I saw them when I was 24 or 5. And I shall love the freedom from hours: & looking about: & the thought of coming back; & sitting talking. & some things I shall read; & one or two views. & —

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This has been the finest, & not only finest, but loveliest, summer in the world. Still, though it blows, how clear & bright it is; & the clouds are opalescent; the long barns on my horizon mouse coloured; the stacks pale gold. Owning the field has given a different orient to my feelings about Rodmell. I begin to dig myself in & take part in it. And I shall build another storey to the house if I make money. But the news of Orlando is black. We may sell a third that we sold of the Lighthouse before publication. Not a shop will buy save in 6es & 12es. They say this is ~~simply~~ unsaleable. No one wants biography. But it is a novel, says Miss Ritchie. But its called biography on the title page, they say. It will have to go to the Biography shelf. I doubt therefore that we shall do more than cover expenses — a high price to pay for the fun of calling it a biography. And I was so sure it was going to be the one popular book! Also it should be 10/6 or 12/6 not 9/— Lord, lord! Then I must write some articles this winter, if we are to have nest eggs at the Bank. Down here I have flung myself tooth & nail on my fiction book, & should have finished the first draft but for Dorothy Osborne whom I'm dashing off. It will need entire re-writing but the ground is done — the rushing through book after book & new what shall I read? These novels

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have hung about me so long. Mercy dies to be put together; & shall I read English poetry, French memoirs — shall I read now for a book to be called "The Lives of the Obscure"? And when, I wonder, shall I begin the Moths? Not until I am forced into it by those insects themselves. Nor have I any notion what it is to be like — a completely new attempt I think. So I always think.

A very gay active summer. Dined with the Keynes' to meet Lord Gage last ~~week~~ Wednesday — found him with his flat face & Circassian blood more of a character than I expected. Clive with inverse snobbery had run him down. We talked about the King; & he snubbed me by saying that he remarked an odd fact — everyone talks to him about the King. Every class, every kind of person, is interested to know what the King has for dinner. And here was I, the intellectual, the Labour woman, doing just the same thing. And there were the Punch Cookes: ~~she~~ her I liked; him I hated. A woman is in some ways so much better than a man — more natural, juicy, unfettered. But then he is a bounder, a climber, a thorny young man, who wants to be smart, cultivated, go-ahead & ~~ch~~ all the rest of it. I must use that cliché because I must do my Osborne article. & it is getting cold out here.

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Saturday
Oct 27th

A scandal, a scandal, to let so much time slip, & I leaning on the Bridge watching it go. Only leaning has not been my pose: running up & down, excitably, gaily, restlessly. And the stream viciously eddying. Why do I write these metaphors? Because I have written nothing for an age. Orlando has been published. I went to Burgundy with Vita. We did not find each other out. It flashed by. Yet I was glad to see Leonard again. How disconnected this is! My ambition is from this very moment, 8 minutes to six, on Saturday evening, to attain complete concentration again. When I have written here, I am going to open Fanny Burney's diaries, & work solidly at that article which Miss McKay cables about. I am going to read, to think. I gave up reading & thinking on the 24th of Sept when I went to France. I came back, & we plunged into London & publishing. I am a little sick of Orlando. I think I am a little indifferent now what anyone thinks. Joy's life's in the doing — I murder, as usual, a quotation: I mean its the writing, not the being read, that excites me. And as I cant write while I'm being read, I am always a little hollow hearted; whipped up; but not so happy as in solitude. The reception, as they say, surpassed expectation. Sales beyond our record for the first week. I was floating rather lazily on praise, when Squire ~~barked~~ barked in the Observer, but even as I sat

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reading him on the banks last Sunday in the shivering red leaves & their illumination, I felt the pink of self esteem untouched in me. "This doesnt really hurt" I said to myself; even now; & sure enough, before evening I was calm, untouched. And now Mrs Hugh in the Morning Post to spread the butter again, & Rebecca West — such a trumpet call of praise — that he was — that I feel a little sheepish & silly. And now no more of that I hope.

Thank God, my long toil at the women's lecture is this moment ended. I am back from speaking at Girton, in floods of rain. Starved but valiant young women — that's my impression. Intelligent eager, poor; & destined to become schoolmistresses in shoals. I blandly told them to ~~t~~ drink wine & have a room of their own. Why should all the splendour, all the luxury of life be lavished on the Julians & the Francises, & none on the Phares & the Thomases? There's Julian not much relishing it, perhaps. I fancy sometimes the world changes. I think I see reason spreading. But I should have liked a closer & thicker knowledge of life. I should have liked to deal with real things sometimes. I get such a sense of tingling & vitality from an evenings talk like that: ones angularities & obscurities are smoothed & lit. How little one counts: I think: how little anyone counts; how fast & furious & masterly life is; & how all these thousands are swimming for dear life. I felt elderly & mature. And nobody respected me. They were very eager, un

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Egalitarian, & rather not much impressed by age & repute. Very little reverence or that sort of thing about. The Corridors of Girton are like vaults in some horrid high church cathedral – on & on they go, cold – shiny – with a light burning. High gothic rooms; acres of bright brown wood; here & there a photograph.

And we saw Trinity & Kings this morning. How to concentrate on English literature – forgetting Mary & Tom & how we went to be read aloud to, & Lady Cunard, & the rest of Clive back & Nessa back. & [illegible]. But Thank God to get back to writing again.

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7th Nov.
1928

And this shall be written for my own pleasure.— But that phrase inhibits me. for if one writes only for one's own pleasure, ~~perhaps~~ — I dont know what it is that happens. I suppose the convention of writing is destroyed: therefore one does not write at all. I am rather headachy, & dimly obscured with sleeping draught. This is the aftermath (what does that mean? — Trench, whom I open idly apparently says nothing) of Orlando. Yes, yes, since I wrote here I have become two inches & a half higher in the public view. I think I may say that I am now among the well known writers. I had tea with Lady Cunard — might have lunched or dined any day. I found her in a little cap telephoning. It was not her atmosphere — this of solitary talk. She is too shrewd to expand, & needs society to make her rash & random which is her point. Ridiculous little parrokeet faced woman; but not quite sufficiently ridiculous. I kept wishing for superlatives. could not get the illusion to shape its wings. Flunkeys, yes: but a little drab & friendly. Marble floors yes: but no glamour; no tune strumming, for me at least. And the two of us sitting there had almost to be conventional & flat — reminded me of Sir Thomas Browne — the greatest book of our time — said a little flatly by a woman of business, to me who dont believe in that kind of thing unless launched with champagne & garlands. Then in came Lord Donegall, a glib Irish youth, dark sallow slick, on the Press.

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Dont they treat you like a dog? I said "No, not at all" he replied, astonished that a marquis could be treated like a dog by anyone. And then we went up & up to see pictures on stairs in bathrooms & finally to Lady C's bedroom, hung entirely with flower pieces. The bed has its triangular canopy of rose red silk: the windows, looking on the square, are ~~bright~~ hung with green brocade. Her poudreuse — like Sienese early painted & gilt stood open with gold brushes looking glasses, & there on her gold slippers were neatly laid gold stockings. All this paraphernalia for one stringy old hop o'my thumb. She set the two great musical boxes playing & I said Did she lie in bed & listen to them? But no. She has nothing fantastic in that way about her. Money is important. She told me rather sordid stories of Lady Sackville never visiting her without getting something off her — now a bust, worth £5, for which she paid £100: now a brass knocker. " Somehow I saw into I didnt care for it.." these sordid commonplace talks, & couldnt sprinkle the air with gold dust easily. But no doubt she has her acuity, her sharp peck at life; only how adorable, I thought, as I tiptoed home in my tight shoes, in the fog, in the chill, could one open one of these doors that I still open so venturously, & find a ~~[illegible]~~ live interesting real person, a Nessa, a Duncan, — Roger. Some one new, whose mind would begin vibrating. Coarse & usual & dull these Cunards — Colefaxes are — for all their astonishing competence in the ~~art~~ ~~of~~ commerce of life.

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And I cannot think what to write next. I mean the situation is, this Orlando is of course a very quick brilliant book. Yes, but I did not try to explore. And must I always explore? Yes I think so still. Because my reaction is not the usual. Nor can I even after all these years run it off lightly. Orlando taught me how to write a direct sentence; taught me continuity & narrative, & how to keep the realities at bay. But I purposely avoided of course any other difficulty. I never got down to my depths & made shapes square up, as I did in the Lighthouse.

Well but Orlando was the outcome of a perfectly definite, indeed overmastering impulse. I want fun. I want fantasy. I want (& this was serious) to give things their caricature value. And still this mood hangs about me. I want to write a history, say of Newnham or the womans movement, in the same vein. The vein is deep in me — at least sparkling, urgent. But is it not stimulated by applause? over stimulated? My notion is that there are offices to be discharged by talent for the relief of genius: meaning that one has the play side; the gift when it is ~~meant~~ mere gift, unapplied gift; & the gift when it is serious, going to business. And one relieves the other.

Yes but The Moths? That was to be an abstract mystical eyeless book: a playpoem. And ~~it~~ I ~~begin sentence~~. There may be affectation in being too mystical, too abstract; saying Nessa & Roger & Duncan & Ethel Sands admire that: it is

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the uncompromising side of me; therefore I had better win their approval —

Again, one reviewer says that I have come to a crisis in the matter of style: it is now so fluent & fluid that it runs through the mind like water. That disease began in The Lighthouse — the first part came fluid — how I wrote & wrote! Shall I now check & consolidate, more in the Dalloway Jacobs Room style?

I rather think the upshot will be books that relieve other books: a variety of styles & subjects: for after all, that is my temperament, I think, to be very little persuaded of the truth of anything — what I say, what people say — always to follow, blindly instinctively with a sense of leaping over a precipice — the call of — the call of — now, if I write the Moths I must come to terms with these mystical feelings.

Desmond destroyed our Saturday walk; he is now mouldy & to me depressing. He is perfectly reasonable & charming. Nothing surprises, nothing shocks him. He has been through it all one feels. He has come out rolled, smoothed, rather sodden rather creased & tumbled, like a man who has sat up all night in a third class railway carriage. His fingers are stained yellow with cigarettes. One tooth in the lower jaw is missing. His hair is dank. His eyes more than ever dubious. He has a hole in his blue sock. Yet he is resolute & determined — that's what I find so

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depressing. He seems to be sure that this his view that is the right one: ours vagaries, deviations. And if his view is the right one, God knows there is nothing to live for: not a greasy biscuit. And the egotism of men surprises & shocks me even now. Is there a woman of my acquaintance who could sit in my arm chair from 3. to 6.30 without the semblance of a ~~though~~ suspicion that I may be busy, or tired, or bored; & so sitting could talk, grumbling & grudging, of her difficulties, worries; then eat chocolates, then read a book, & so go at last, apparently self-complacent & wrapped in a kind of blubber of misty self-satisfaction? Not the girls at Newnham or Girton. They are far too spry; far too disciplined. None of that self-confidence is their lot.

We paid for our dinner at the Leon. Miss Thomas & Miss — & were relieved, not to have to part with quite so many half crowns. And they showed us the chocolate coloured corridors of Girton, like convent cells; —

And there was the meeting in Mrs Williams Ellis's studio — a vast hall in Ebury Street, with ostentatiously ragged chair covers. Our raggedness, as a profession, was not ostentatious alas; it is part of our souls: a dowdiness that is not ragged, however; a meticulous respectability which is not my working state; for there I am, I think, almost ~~picturesq~~ picturesque. As a crowd together we achieve only dinginess & something egotistic & unreserved in our faces: as for old Garnett, I felt surely someone ought to put that surly shaggy

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unkempt old monstrosity (certainly his nails want cutting & his
coat is matted with mud & burrs) in the lethal chamber.
So of his mistress: the top half Esquimaux, the bottom
Maytime in Hampstead – sprigged muslin, sandals.
Vita was like a lamp or torch in all this petty
bourgeoisdom: a tribute to the breeding of the Sackvilles,
for without care of her clothes she appears among them ~~like~~ a
in ~~all the sanity & strength of a well made body~~. None
of them have that; or know not how to carry it.
Poor Rose Macaulay – a mere chit: a wafer – & so on
to the Hendersons in Hampstead, where my spleen &
Frankie's were twin spleens: for Frankie however
kept his rattle & clapper going, hour after hour,
sounding alone, while I sank into a tolerable
arm chair & could say nothing; though Mrs Enfield
who has read the whole of Balzac made advances
with Proust. Faith, I think, saw in their languor,
bad manners & conceit. She saw us despising her
home & husband. She despised them herself. And
she went to bed saying something bitter to Hubert, &
looked back into the drawing room, wondering
why all the colours were wrong. But
then next morning there are the children at
breakfast & she recovers somewhat, but has to
speak severely about Mr. Maypole, the
hired help (10/ a night) who dropped the plates; &
left Mr. Birrell holding the ladle; &
the ice was salt. Then she takes up Orlando –
says, to Hubert, This is a grossly over rated book –..
It is far far worse than the Lighthouse ...
at the same time, What exciting lives these people lead!
"
Bloomsbury . . .

a lamppost,
straight,
glowing,

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8th Nov.

Just to solace myself before correcting Hardy & Gissing, I will note that we went to Karin's party last night. The pitch of the stimulus is too brisk; ~~&~~ one rattles: & only a shout can be heard, & one must stand; & one gets caught, like a bramble in a river by some branch; & hooked up out of the eddy. An emerald green Russian gabbled to me of deals & they gave me a card; I am to lecture 4 times a week for 8 weeks in America — oh yes — & she will arrange most advantageous terms. But we mustn't mention money in a drawing room: so we lapse upon deals again, in Ann's rabbit — or chinchilla animal lying languidly extended in the midst of the rumpus, exquisite, alien. Ethel Sands, fanning my vanity into a glow: yet she was downcast the other night that Orlando isnt a patch on Lighthouse, with talk of luncheon parties where nothing is talked about but &c. &c. Janet & Agar to dinner. The young man who wants a job is not amicable; poor old Agar cuts up a little rough & launches into agelong worried explanations about his play. He will never now break through that chrysalis case of gentlemanly reserve caution, good manners which shells him in. I think he will meditate more & more upon the glories of being in Windsor. Yet he has his scallywag side, the poor mews, dancing & dining, which is to his credit. Janet in comparison seemed rapid, decided & lustrous, all in red for Karin's party with Madge's gold necklace, & something very like Madge now & then: but tempered with the Vaughan decision. She is an attractive woman; competent, disinterested, taking blood tests all day to solve some abstract problem.

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Saturday
15th Nov.

This unexampled fluency here is due to the fact that I
should *now* be reading Miss Jewsbury, answering
letters (Lady Cunard to dine alone with George Moore)
or correcting Hardy's poems. All these tasks are
unworthy [illegible] the sacred morning hours. ~~Only~~ phrase
making can only be done then; so I toss them privately
here, feeling relieved not to be making money, once
in a while. Shall I say that Bennett in the
Ev^g Standard hurt me less than Squire in the Observer?
Not at all, I think: — an odd thing though, how I am
praised & abused. & what a thing I am in the flanks of
Squires & Bennetts. What is more interesting — &
Lord knows this is true — I am speaking coolly &
faithfully — is the trial yesterday at Bow Street.
We were all packed in by 10.30: the door at the
top of the court opened; in stepped the debonair
distinguished magistrate; we all rose; he bowed; took his
seat under the lion & the unicorn, & then proceeded.
Something like a Harley St. specialist investigating a case.
All black & white, his face, clean shaven, waxy coloured,
& carved, in that light, like ivory. He was
ironical at first; raised his eyebrows & shrugged.
Still I was impressed by the reason of the law,
its astuteness, its formality. Here have we
evolved a very remarkable fence between us &
barbarity; something commonly recognised;
holy humbug & ceremony therefore — when they
hauled out calf bound books & read old phrases
I thought this, & the bowing & scraping made

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me think it, but in these banks runs a live stream. What is obscenity? What is literature? What is the difference between the subject & the treatment? In what cases is evidence allowable? This last, to my relief, was decided against us: we could not be called as experts in obscenity, only in art. So Desmond who had got into under the ~~salan~~ palanquin where he looked too indifferent, too calm, too completely at his ease to be natural was only asked his qualifications & then, not allowed to answer the obscene question, was dismissed. In the hall I talked to Lady Troubridge (who used to skip in last time we met was a tea party. as children, in Montpelier Sqre) & John — John lemon yellow, tough, stringy, exacerbated. Their costs run up to 4 figures the decid. And Leonard thinks this heralds a indescribable. After lunch we heard an hour more, & then the magistrate, increasingly deliberate — Courteous said he would read the book again: & the hall behind Sapphic book which lay damp in Stab all about the court. And lost my little Roman brooch, & that is the end of this great day. So far A curious brown top lighted scene: very stuffy; policemen at the doors; matrons peeping through; an atmosphere quite decent & formal, of adult people.

Give judgment next Friday at two.

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Sunday
25th Nov.

Leonard's 48th birthday. We were at Rodmell. where all has fallen into our hands, wholly, unexpectedly: a top of the field we get a cottage, & Percy is 'our man' Mrs. Percy has inherited from that strange relationship of hers — I suspect her of being the illegitimate child of a circus manager — they have had — she never speaks of her family — her father died alone — her brother left jewels & clothes — she has inherited £330 — some odd shillings: she has bought a set of big white teeth; & now thinks of a gramophone or a wireless set.

I took Eliz & Ex (Lytton's) down to read, & heaven forgive me! — find it a poor book. I have not finished it; & ~~has~~ am keeping it to see if my

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Wednesday Nov. 28th

Fathers birthday. He would have been $\begin{array}{r}1928\\1832\\\hline 96\end{array}$ 96, yes, today; & could have been 96, like other people one has known: but mercifully was not. His life would have entirely ended mine. What would have happened? No writing, no books;—inconceivable. I used to think of him & mother daily; but ~~after~~ writing the Lighthouse, laid them in my mind. And now he comes back sometimes, but differently. (I believe this to be true—that I was obsessed by them both, unhealthily; & writing of them was a necessary act.) He comes back now more as a contemporary. I must read him some day. I wonder if I can feel again, I hear his voice, I know this by heart?

Last night was one of our Evenings—apparently successful. Adrian, Hope, Christa, Clive, Raymond, Bunny, Lytton, Vita & Valery toward the end: & Elizabeth Ponsonby. People enjoyed it. Perhaps I didnt; perhaps I did. Halfway through Lytton vanished (he lodges upstairs) draged out of the room by Clives vociferation, I think. Clive makes it all very strident, gaslit, band played. I marked a queer change in my ~~bodily~~ feeling when Lytton went. At other times I have felt his silence disapproving; have moderated my jolly under it. I tried to keep him from going. But now that man writes Elizabeth & Essex; I kept thinking: well,

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if he can produce that after all these years of effort — that lively superficial meretricious book — he can go his way as he likes. I feel no bite in his disapproval. And though one of my vile vices is jealousy, of other ~~wd~~ writers fame, though I am (& I think we all are) secretly pleased to find Lytton's book a bad one, I also feel depressed. If I were to analyse, the truth is I think that the pleasure is mean, & one therefore not deep or satisfying; one would in the depths, have got real pleasure, though superficial pain, had E & E been a masterpiece — Oh yes, I should — for I have a mind that feeds perfectly dispassionately & apart from my vanities & jealousies upon literature: & that would have taken a masterpiece to itself. Mixed last night with my feeling was some curious personal disillusion: that Lytton whom I loved & love should write like that. Its a reflection on my own taste. Its so feeble, so shallow; & yet Lytton in himself is neither. So one next accuses the public: & then the Carringtons & the young men. And one furbishes up a cloistered young men. And one furbishes up a cloistered secluded invalidish Lytton whipping the flanks of the language & pulling it to this foaming gallop, when the poor beast is all spavins & sores. And Wadie & Pernel & Janie Bussy & Dorothy all declared with emotion that this book was his best!

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So the days pass, & I ask myself sometimes whether one is not hypnotised, as a child by a silver globe, by life; & whether this is living. Its very quick, bright, exciting. But superficial perhaps. I should like to take the globe in my hands & feel it quietly, round, smooth, heavy, & so hold it, day after day. I will read Proust I think. I will go back ~~& back~~ & wards & forwards. As for my next book, I am going to hold myself from writing till I have it impending in me: grown heavy in my mind like a ripe pear; pendant, gravid, asking to be cut or it will fall. The Moths still haunts me, coming, as they always do, unbidden, between tea & dinner, while L. plays the gramophone. I shape a page or two; & make myself stop. Indeed I am up against some difficulties. Fame to begin with. Orlando has done very well. Now I could go on writing like that — the tug & suck are at me to do it. People say this was so spontaneous, so natural. And I would like to keep those qualities if I could without losing the others. But those qualities were largely the result of ignoring the others. They came of writing exteriorly; & if I dig, must I not lose them? And whats my own position towards the inner & the outer? I think a kind of ease & dash are good; — yes: I think even externality is good; some combination ~~them~~

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of them ought to be possible. The idea has come to me
that what I want now to do is to saturate every
atom. I mean to eliminate all waste, deadness,
superfluity: to give the moment whole; ~~when~~
whatever it includes. Say that the moment
is a combination of thought; sensation: the voice of the sea.
Waste, deadness, come from the inclusion of things
that don't belong to the moment: this appalling
narrative business of the realist: getting on from
~~dinn~~ lunch to dinner: it is false, unreal, merely
conventional. Why admit any thing to
literature that is not poetry — by which I mean
saturated? Is that not my grudge against novelists?

that they select nothing?

The poets ~~succeed~~ ~~simplifying~~ ~~by~~ succeeding by
simplifying: practically everything is left out. I
want to put practically every thing in: yet to saturate.
That is what I want to do in The Moths.
It must include nonsense, fact, sordidity: but
made transparent. I think I must read Ibsen —
Shakespeare. & Racine. And I will write
something about them; for that is the ~~only~~ best spur,
my mind being what it is; then I read with
fury & gathers. Otherwise I skip & skip: I am —
~~an~~ lazy reader. But no: I am surprised & a
little. disquieted by the remorseless severity of my
mind: that it never stops reading & writing;
makes me write on Geraldine Jewsbury, on
Hardy, on Women — ~~which~~ is too professional,
too little any longer a dreamy amateur.

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Saturday
Dec. 8th

Here is a note hardly dashed off (10 to one — just finished, very provisionally "Phases of Fiction") upon Christabel McLaren: & her 'crinkle party', as I call it, the other night. I mean she pecked me out with a pin — about Lesbianism, & Dotty — (she is not one) My note was about her attitude to men: the adoring, flattering woman's attitude, which I so seldom see so purely. Like a flame leaping up. Such a Clive 'the most honourable of men" — yes but said with a devoutness, a radiancy that made me laugh. Is this the 'natural' attitude between the sexes? What Clive has, the other way round for women? So cordial, so appreciative: I could hear it kindling her voice when she said "The men were bathing or writing letters or talking" — that was at Sherfield. The men, good delightful creatures, were so engaged while that wretched furtive creature D. passed me. And I can see man after man, Desmond, Clive, see Wells, Shaw, warming his hands at this natural warmth, & expanding. It amused me. The other thought I had was about the limits of luxury: how far ~~much~~ far can the human soul stretch into rugs & rooms: at what point they suffocate its force. I have seen several such people this autumn; & thought them, perhaps, dulled, coarsened by it: Lady Cunard: two days ago Mrs Bowen. Mrs Grenfell at Lydias.

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Sunday
Dec. 9th

These reflections are written on a bitter cold evening to get the taste of silence into my mouth again: Angelica came this morning, & every time I lifted my pen, she, — heavenly bitter creature that she is, demure, witty fantastic, neatly tipped the cup upside down: like a fool I went on trying to write, & only gave up when I was in a state of exasperation, not with her, but with my book: I was beginning a new beginning to fiction: Now its after tea; Angus will be coming to see Leonard about a character; & I am creaked, & cant be got at; & shall read Troilus & Cressida (Chaucer) till dinner. I have again seen too many people. without much intensity: Lydia's Polish tea party; & the Bagenals lunch, & being driven up by Christa: & then Long Barn, & Dotty: "I cant say I understand Harold — I cant really say I do" — Then Vita, making a sacrifice after quiet evening, drove up to London & heard her broadcast & went back with her. to save me the solitary drive: This worried me, rather: for whom would I give up this evening? & then Dotty with her pecking exacting ways & Plum dear put the window up — put the window down" makes Vita seem to me pathetically gentle & kind. But none of this matters very much I agree, & Lord helping, I shall work all this week — save for the evenings: Its so cold my back is cold now, while the fire roasts my feet; fire is

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striking & many fire engines have rushed down Southampton Row. The King is dragging along, & the shop assistants are in fear lest they shall lose their Christmas bonus. Christmas impends. And we shall spend it alone here. I think, & go to Rodmell. ~~& go~~ afterwards & plan a new room, with Kennedy. And then to Berlin we say. Meanwhile Nessa & I give our Tuesday evenings, & too many people press to come. But why I ask "see" people? Whats the point? These isolated occasions which come so often. ~~Seeing~~ May I come & see you? And what they get, or I get, save the sense of a slide passing on a screen. Slant Day.

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18th Dec.

Now I should be jogging away at Fiction; rather an interesting little book I think; but I cannot get my mind down on to it. Like a bird of prey formerly attached. Have sketched off — wrote a eulogy of Lady Strachey, buried yesterday with a bunch of our red & white carnations on top of her.

It's odd how little her death means to me — for this reason. About a year ago she was said to be dying; & at once (Adrian told me) I made up my usual visualisation; felt the whole emotion of Lady Strachey's passing — her memories & so on — ~~[illegible]~~ that night; & then she did not die; & now when she does die, not a vision, not an emotion comes my way. These little tricks of psychology amuse me.

L. has just been in to consult about a 3rd edition of Orlando. This has been ordered; & we have sold over 6000 copies; & sales are still amazingly brisk — 150 today for instance; most days between 50 & 60: always to my surprise. Will they stop or go on? Anyhow my room is secure. For the first time since I married 1912 – 1928 – 16 years – I have been spending money. The spending muscle does not work naturally yet. I feel guilty; put off buying, when I know that I should buy; & yet have an agreeable

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superfluous sense of coins in my pocket beyond my weekly 13/— which was always running out, or being encroached upon. Yesterday I spent 15/- on a steel brooch. I spent £3. on a mother of pearl necklace — & I haven't bought a jewel for 20 years perhaps! I have carpeted the dining room — & soon. I think one's soul is the better for this lubrication; & I am going to spend freely, & then write, & so keep my brain on the boil. All this money making originated in a spasm of black despair one ~~morning~~ night at Rodmell. 2 years ago. I was tossing up & down on those awful waves: when I said that I could find a way out. (For part of my misery was the perpetual limitation of everything; no chairs, or beds, no comfort, no beauty; & no freedom to move: all of which I determined there & then to win. And so came, with some argument, even tears one night (& how seldom I have ever cried!) to an agreement with Leonard, about sharing money after a certain sum; & then opened a bank account; & now, at the lowest shall have £200 to put there on Jan. 1st — The important thing is to spend freely, without fuss or anxiety; & to trust to one's powers of making more — Indeed, I cannot at this moment very seriously doubt that I shall earn more, this next 5 years, than ever before. I met

But to return to Max Beerbohm.

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at Ethel's the other night. As I came in a thick set old man (such was my impression) rose, & I was introduced. No freakishness, no fancy about him. His face is solidified; has a thick moustache; a red veined skin, heavy lines; but then his eyes are perfectly round, very large, & sky blue. The eyes become dreamy & merry when the rest of him is well groomed & decorous in the extreme. He is brushed, neat, urbane. Half way through dinner he turned to me & we began a 'nice', intimate, flattering, charming kind of talk: he told me how he had read an article on Addison at Bognor during the war; when literature seemed extinct; & there was his own name. I daresay V. W catches your eye as M-B. does mine: And nothing has encouraged me more. So I said, as I think, then he is immortal. In a small way, he said; without complacency. Like a jewel what is hard & flawless, yet always changing — A charming image he said, very kind, approving. — what lady flattered lady understood me, equal. Am I on that level? Virginia Woolf says — V. W. thinks — how do you write? & so on: I was one of his colleagues. Fellows in the art of writing: but not I liked quite so old. Anyhow he asked me how I wrote — For he hacks every thing with his pen, & therefore never alters. He thought I wrote like this. I told him I had to cut out great chunks. I wish you would send

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them to me. he said; simply; Indeed, he was nothing if not kind; but looked long & steadily. looked at Lord David — that queer painter's look, so matching, so considering apart from human intent; yet with him not entirely. After dinner, he leant on the mantelpiece; Maurice Baring & I flittered round him like a pair of butterflies. praising, laughing, extravagant. And he said he was so pleased by the praise of intelligent people like ourselves. But always he had to be led off to talk politely to other people & that; & finally disappeared, very dignified, very discreet, in his white waistcoat, pressing my hand in his what a pleasure plumps from one long; & saying &c.

I own that I dont find much difference between the great & ourselves — indeed they are like us: I mean they dont have the ~~[illegible]~~ frills & furbelows of the small; come to terms quickly & simply. But we got, of course, very little way. He talked of Hardy. & said he couldnt bear Jude the Obscure: thought it falsified life, for there is really more of happiness than sorrow in life. & Hardy tries to prove the opposite; And his writing is so bad. Then I ran down — but he reading my essays & knows this. Belloc. M. B. said that Belloc, one must remember, poured out ten books a year on history poetry &c. He was one of those full

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unequal people who were never perfect, as he, Mr B. might be called perfect in a small way. But he was glad I didnt like him. Charlie Lamb had the most beautiful things in him — & then he spoilt them. He had never read a book except Pendennis & Tess of the D'Urbervilles till he left Oxford. And now at last, at Rapallo, he reads. He is taking back Elizabeth & Orlando (pronounced in the French way) to read; Keats he looks forward to.

Among others were present ... Mrs Hammersley, Lord David, Hutchinsons, &c.

And we dined last night with the Hutchinsons & met George Moore — like an old silver coin now, so white so smooth; with his little flipper hands, & little like a walrus; & his chubby cheeks, & little knees — yet always saying the thing that comes into his head; fresh, juvenile almost yes that leaps; & very shrewd. Gave a description of Riceyman Steps — the flowers covered in dust, the man with cancer, the woman with fits — not marrying what one calls a distinguished mind — & what a subject to choose! It seems as if he attaches much importance to subject. He was always praising or altering ways of treating stories. He

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writing some Greek novel now, dictating to a charming
lady, who has every virtue, save that she is not
forthcoming & therefore will not marry the
dictator, & this gives him something to bite upon:
then he re-dictates. He never writes. There are
no mss of his in existence. Perhaps the dictated
style is a true account of his style & of H. J's.
It accounts for their fluidity, their verbosity.
And what it comes to is that the great are very
simple: quick to come to terms with; reserved;
& dont pay any attention to ~~their~~ other peoples
books (Moore throws scorn on them all —
Shaw — a streak of vulgarity — poisoned
with vulgarity — never wrote a good sentence in
his life — Wells — I share myself Wells —
& Galsworthy —) & live in an atmosphere
very serene, bright, & spread out: for all that
they are more to the point than ordinary
people: go to the heart of things directly.
Moore toddled off & got quickly into a
Cab. Jack said, for all the look of an old
silver coin.

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